

National Environmental Policy Act regulations (40 CFR 1506.6).

DATES: Written comments on the application should be received on or before June 16, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Persons wishing to review the application may obtain a copy by writing to the Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 1306, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103. Persons wishing to review the EA/HCP may obtain a copy by contacting Christina Longacre, Ecological Services Field Office, 10711 Burnet Road, Suite 200, Austin, Texas 78758 (512/490-0063). Documents will be available for public inspection by written request, by appointment only, during normal business hours (8:00 to 4:30) at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Austin, Texas. Written data or comments concerning the application and EA/HCP should be submitted to the Field Supervisor, Ecological Field Office, Austin, Texas at the above address. Please refer to permit number TE-010556-0 when submitting comments.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Christina Longacre at the above Austin Ecological Services Field Office.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 9 of the Act prohibits the "taking" of endangered species such as the golden-cheeked warbler. However, the Service, under limited circumstances, may issue permits to take endangered wildlife species incidental to, and not the purpose of, otherwise lawful activities. Regulations governing permits for endangered species are at 50 CFR 17.22.

Applicants

Jim and John Hunt plan to construct two single family residences on City Park Road Austin, Travis County, Texas. This action will eliminate less than two acres of habitat and indirectly impact less than eight additional acres of golden-cheeked warbler habitat. The applicant proposes to compensate for this incidental take of golden-cheeked warbler habitat by donating \$1,500 per home into the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve to acquire/manage lands for the conservation of the golden-cheeked warbler and place the remaining balance of the property in a conservation easement in perpetuity.

Alternatives to this action were rejected because not developing the subject property with federally listed species present was not economically feasible and alteration of the project design would increase the impacts on

the listed species and surrounding environment.

Geoffrey Haskett,

*Acting Regional Director, Region 2,
Albuquerque, New Mexico.*

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BILLING CODE 4510-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Availability of Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment for Pond Creek National Wildlife Refuge in Sevier County, AR, and Notice of Meeting To Seek Public Participation

SUMMARY: This notice advises the public that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Southeast Region, has made available for public review a Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment for Pond Creek National Wildlife Refuge in Sevier County, Arkansas, and plans to hold a public meeting in the vicinity of the refuge to solicit public comments on the Draft Plan. The Service is furnishing this notice in compliance with Service comprehensive planning policy, the National Environmental Act Policy, and implementing regulations to achieve the following:

- (1) advise other agencies and the public of our intention, and
- (2) obtain comments on the proposed plan and the other alternatives considered in the planning process.

DATES: The Service will hold the public meeting at 7 p.m. on June 3, 1999, at the Horatio Elementary School cafeteria, Horatio, Arkansas. The Draft Plan will be made available for review and comment. Written comments should be submitted no later than June 30, 1999, to the address below.

ADDRESSES: Comments and request for copies of the Draft Plan should be addressed to Mr. Ed Loth, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Southeast Regional Office, 1875 Century Boulevard, Atlanta, GA 30345, or by calling 404/679-7155.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Pond Creek National Wildlife Refuge is a 27,000-acre area located between the Cossatot and Little rivers. This refuge was established to protect, enhance, and manage a valuable bottomland hardwood wetland ecosystem for the benefit of migratory and resident waterfowl, neotropical birds, wading birds, and other wetland-dependent wildlife. The area is considered a vital component of the North American

Waterfowl Management Plan and the Arkansas-Red Ecosystem Plan.

It is the desire of the Fish and Wildlife Service that Pond Creek National Wildlife Refuge become "a model refuge that protects and manages biological diversity for the enjoyment and benefit of present and future generations." To achieve this vision, the refuge seeks to achieve the following four goals: (1) habitat management-maintain and restore diverse habitats designed to achieve refuge purpose and wildlife population objectives; (2) populations management-maintain viable, diverse populations of native flora and fauna consistent with sound biological principles; (3) land conservation-protect the area's wetlands and restore values through land protection strategies; and (4) wildlife-dependent recreation and education—develop and implement a quality wildlife-dependent recreation program that leads to enjoyable recreation experiences and a greater understanding and appreciation of fish and wildlife resources.

The Draft Plan evaluates the following four alternatives for managing the refuge over the next 15 years: custodial management, minimal management, balanced management, and resource management. The Service believes the balanced management alternative is the best alternative to guide the refuge's future direction. In essence this alternative will:

- Increase protection of threatened and endangered species;
- Increase waterfowl and songbird utilization and production;
- Enhance resident wildlife populations;
- Restore wetlands and hydrology; and
- Provide long-term opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation and environmental education.

Dated: May 4, 1999.

C. Monty Halcomb,

Acting Regional Director.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[MT-921-09-1320-01; MTM 80697]

Coal Lease Offering

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of coal lease offering by sealed bid MTM 80697—Western Energy Company.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the coal resources in the lands described